

-WASHINGTON, DC. – Chairman Wm. Lacy Clay (D) Missouri, pressed the Acting Census Director and the media group in charge of national and local census advertising to detail how they plan to reduce the national Census undercount among minorities and other hard to count populations. Mr. Clay, who chairs the House Subcommittee on Information Policy, the Census and National Archives, conducted an extensive hearing earlier today which included testimony from Acting Census Director Thomas L. Mesenbourg; Government Accounting Office Strategic Issues Director Robert Goldenkoff; New York City Census Coordinator Stacey Cumberbatch and Jeff Tarakajian, Executive Vice President of DRAFTFBC Media.

“The Census partnership programs and targeted media are critical to reaching the audiences who are most likely to be missed. In 2000, the Census missed 3 million Americans. Many of them were African American or Hispanic, most were poor, and all of them deserved to be counted,” said Chairman Clay. “I expect the Census Bureau, the Partnership organizations and the advertising campaign to aggressively target these hard to count populations and to make serious progress in reducing the chronic undercount of minorities. The Census is really about three things: information, federal funding, and proper political representation. When we miss any American, we deprive his or her community of all three of those precious resources. Every American counts, and every American deserves to be counted.”

In his testimony to Mr. Clay’s subcommittee, GAO Strategic Issues Director Robert Goldenkoff reported that “The Bureau has made notable progress in rolling out key components of its communications campaign; if implemented as planned, the campaign will help the Bureau to address the undercount. For example, to help promote the Census, especially to hard to count groups, the Bureau plans to partner with state, local and tribal governments; religious, community and social service organizations; and private businesses to secure a more complete count. Thus far, the Bureau has secured partnerships with more than 10,000 organizations for 2010.”

Chairman Clay’s questioning of Acting Census Director Mesenbourg and Jeff Tarakajian, Executive Vice President of DRAFTFBC Media, revealed that with the addition of \$1 billion from the Obama stimulus plan, the total communications budget for Census 2010 is now \$312 million. That figure is \$50 million more than in 2000.

Within that projected budget, \$258 million will be spent on paid media, both at the national and local levels. In terms of actual media buys, the Bureau plans to spend \$63 million on national media, which is primarily targeted at Americans whose first language is English. \$83 million will be targeted at the local level via print, broadcast, transit, web and other forms of advertising to reach hard to count populations. Those local media buys will include messages in 19 languages.

Acting Census Director Mesenbourg also reported to Chairman Clay that the Bureau has learned valuable lessons from 2000 which will greatly improve targeting for 2010. For instance, the evidence proves that the strongest indicator of whether an individual will complete and return a Census form is the composition of that household. Traditional households, headed by

both a man and a woman, are the most likely to respond. While single parent households, especially those headed by women, are the least likely to respond. Census 2010 targeting efforts will be adapted to reach these harder to count Americans. Acting Director Mesenbourg also told Chairman Clay that the bureau was making a special effort to update its mailing address canvass to reflect homes lost to foreclosure.